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ABSTRACT

German women have achieved much of which their mothers only dreamed; however, there is still plenty of work to be done in the fight to secure equal rights. Women are becoming more involved in politics. For example, today 8.6% of parliament is female compared to 7.1% in 1949. German women are not drafted for military service, but they can now volunteer as doctors in the federal defense forces. German trade unions and jobs in the cultural sphere remain largely the domain of men. Since 1978 there has been sexual equality in the pastoral office of the German Evangelical church. The wives of German presidents have used their positions not to increase their prestige in society, but for welfare work. Of the 18.7 million German women between the ages of 15 and 59, 10 million work, mostly in textile, cleaning, social care, and health service vocations. More women are attending college, however, and receiving professional training. The German women's movement has a strong social commitment, sponsoring women's centers, bookshops, publications, and magazines. Important addresses and literature for further reference are also included. (RM)

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Special Analysis

Nora's daughters have grown up

- Women in public life in the Federal Republic of Germany -

by

Martina I. Kischke

SO 014 332

Bei Abdruck Beleg erbeten

Contents

		Page
1.	A long way	1
2.	Women and Politics	2
3.	Women and the armed forces	6
4.	Women and the trade unions	7
5.	Women and the churches	9
6.	The wives of the Federal Presidents	11
7.	Women in the cultural sphere	12
8.	Women and Industry	14
9.	The women's movement and education	15
10.	The new women's movement	18
11.	Profession and partnership	20
12.	Important addresses	22
13.	Literature for further reference	22

1. A long way

The day on which an attempt at female emancipation was first presented and discussed in public is known. It was January 20, 1880. The scene was Oslo. It was on this day that Henrik Ibsen's "Nora or a Doll's House" was staged for the first time.

This marriage drama is still regarded by many women today as a lesson in emancipation. For Nora gives up her secure married existence and leaves husband and children in order to "bring herself up." Today the term would be "to realise her own potential." The play of the Norwegian dramatist, in which the woman gets her own way as a partner with equal rights to her husband, was a subject of hot discussion at the turn of the century, particularly in Germany. For efforts had long been going on here to obtain more rights for women who at that time had not even got the vote.

In the public mind the German Noras took off and began their ascent in 1918. Since that year women in Germany have had both active and passive election rights. Following the second world war in 1949 equal rights for men and women became an article of the constitution in the newly established Federal Republic of Germany. To begin with, however, the German Noras had no reason to be overjoyed at having secured equal rights on paper. The husband continued for instance, to have the express right to "terminate an existing employment contract made bys his wife." In other words if the Lord and Master decided, Nora must return to the doll's hause.

Not until 1958 did the so-called Equal Rights law come into force in the Federal Republic. It stated in so many words:

> "The wife has the responsibility for the running of the home. She has the right to take up employment insofar as this does not conflict with her duties in the marriage and to the family. Each married partner is obliged to cooperate in the profession or business of the other

(1)

insofar as this is usual in the circumstances in which the married partners live."

Nora had won a further slice of freedom. But she was still legally tied down to the classical role of the woman inasmuch as the law only ascribed "marriage and family duties " to the female partner only. It took until 1977 before the "partnership principle" was introduced with the first law for the reform of the Marriage and Family Acts. Since then there has been no legally anchored division of duties in marriage. The new law states: "Both marriage partners have the right to take up paid employment." One has to know this background in order to understand why women are still under-represented in the public life of the Federal Republic of Germany although they represent more than half the population - to be exact 52.4 percent. However in recent years women have expanded their outside activities. On the whole women are more self-assured and more deeply engaged in the fight to secure their rights. In politics and trade union work, in religious and cultural life women in the Federal Republic have proven that the picture of the little woman sitting at home by the fireside is gradually fading into the past.

Nora's daughters have grown up.

2. Women and Politics

At the end of 1980 the Federal Ministry for Youth, Families and Health issued a brochure "Women '80" with the following comment:

> "The actual position of women in society in the Federal Republic does not correspond in all fields to their legal position. Traditional ideas of the woman's role and the unequal division of duties in the family are important factors standing in the way of stronger participation by women in public life. A marked increase can be observed however, in the participation in activities in public life, particularly by younger and better educated women."

This observation still holds good on the whole. The explanation for this is mainly that the legal framework for the emancipation of women changes, so to speak, in fits and starts and at long intervals.

Just the same women today are playing an important part in the public life of the Federal Republic even if they have not yet assumed the place that is due to them if only on account of the proportion of the population they represent. In the four large parties that are represented in parliament there are relatively many woman members. In the Social-democratic party of Germany 223,645 of the 956,490 members are women - or about 23 per cent. In the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) 149,176 of the 705,116 members are women - about 21 per cent. Its Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union (CSU) has 23,404 women among its 175,295 members which is a good 13 per cent. And the Free Democrats (FDP) have among their 86,948 members exactly 21,363 women, which amounts to a share of nearly 25 per cent.

This numerical relationship works out in parliament as follows: Of the 519 members of the present ninth German Federal Parliament 45 are women or barely nine per cent. In the governing party, the SPD which has 226 M.P.s, 19 of them are women; the coalition partner F.D.P. with 54 M.P.s has eight women in its ranks. The parties in opposition CDU/CSU have 237 M.P.s of whom 18 are women. The German Press Agency says that the German Federal Parliament "in comparison to the British House of Commons (2.9 per cent) and the Swedish Parliament (27.5 per cent) holds a middle place" so far as the number of women members goes.

In the present government team so far one woman holds a Minister's post - Anke Fuchs (SPD), who is responsible for Youth, Families and Health. She took over the post early in 1982 from Frau Antje Huber. The woman politician, Dr. Hildegard Hamm-Bruecher has held the rank of a Minister of State in the Foreign Ministry since 1977. Born in 1921 this F.D.P. politician is, like Antje Huber and Anke Fuchs, is married and, like the latter, has two children.

Among the best-known woman politicians in the Federal Republic of Germany since 1973 is Social-democrat Annemarie Renger, who was elected President of the German Federal Parliament on December 13, 1972. After four years in office she said: "I have achieved in this time what I

what I wanted to - it has been proven that a woman can do it." When in October, 1976 the CDU/CSU came out of the Federal parliamentary elections as the strongest party it supplied the new President of parliament. Annemarie Renger became vice-President, an office which she still holds today.

The proportion of women in parliament over the years has been as follows:

1. Parliament	(1949 - 1953)	7.1 per cent
2. Parliament	(1953 - 1957)	8.8 per cent
3. Parliament	(1957 - 1961)	9.2 per cent
4. Parliament	(1961 - 1965)	8.3 per cent
5. Parliament	(1965 - 1969)	6.9 per cent
6. Parliament	(1969 - 1972)	6.6 per cent
7. Parliament	(1972 - 1976)	5.8 per cent
8. Parliament	(1976 - 1980)	7.3 per cent
9. Parliament	(1980 -)	8.6 per cent

(Source: Federal Press Office)

(In the parliaments of the Federal Laender (States) the percentage of women members has averaged for years past about seven per cent).

The participation of German women in elections is only slightly less than that of men. In October, 1980 87.1 per cent of women went to the polls compared with 88.2 per cent of men. The interest that women in the Federal Republic of Germany take in politics appears to grow with increasing age. A glance at the statistics of electoral participation proves that. In the group of 40 - 45 year old women 90.4 per cent recorded votes in 1980, of women between 50 and 60 91.6 per cent voted while of the women between 60 and 70 the figure was 91.3 per cent. Only among the over-70 age group did the percentage sink to 83.6 per cent - yet even in this group the women showed themselves to be more politically interested than women between the ages of 25 and 30 of whom 82.6 per cent turned out to vote.

Male politicians always seem to have difficulty in bringing themselves to award Minister's posts to female politicians.

So far six women have been members of Federal governments (two women from the CDU and four women from the SPD). The chair of the head of the Laender (States) governments has always been occupied by a male.

The situation for political work by women on the local government level is somewhat better. In local democratic assemblies the old saying that politics is "men's business" no longer has validity. On average in all local authority areas of over 20,000 inhabitants about 12 per cent of the council members are women. In the big cities with over 100,000 population it is even 15 per cent. The politically active women get their expertise for the most part from the women's groups in their political parties. In the SPD the working group of Social-democratic women is responsible, in the case of the CDU/CSU it is the women's association. The F.D.P. is the only one that has no women's group inside the party.

Equal rights on paper is good but control over the actual situation is better. That is why in the middle of 1979 a working staff for women's policy was created in the Federal Ministry for Youth, Families and Health. The range of tasks for the working staff is just as widely spread as it is important. It is supposed to develop ideas how the requirements of women can be better attended to and pass on these ideas to the permanent specialist departments. Projects of the Federal government are examined for their effects on women and finally research and model projects are developed with the aim of removing the disadvantages that women still face.

To put into practice the equal rights guaranteed to women by law various Federal Laender have established special "equality" offices. In North-rhine Westphalia, Hessen, Hamburg and Lower Saxony such offices are already at work staffed by commissions of women . Not the least of their tasks is to give the women the courage to come out in the open and combat discrimination.
How far women can go is shown by an example from Frankfurt--on-Main which could act as a signal for others. For the first time in the Federal Republic of Germany a Labour

Tribunal has had to busy itself with the question whether women in private industry have a legal claim to a working life just as long as that of their male colleagues. In practice this would mean that a woman would not have to retire at the age of 60 but like her male colleagues could go on working until her 63rd or 65th birthday.

Judges in the Federal Republic have recently had to concern themselves with women's activities though in another connection. The District court at Kaiserslautern valued the labour of a housewife in 1981 at 4,067 DM and 49 pfennigs a month. The judges based their valuation on a woman who took care of a family of five persons necessitating 57.1 working hours a week. The sum was calculated according to the wages of a housekeeper. The plaintiff was the father of three children whose 34-year old wife had been killed in a road accident. The drive responsible for the accident together with his insurance company were ordered to pay over 4,000 Marks a month in monthly compensation.

3. Women and the armed forces

Women are not called up for military service in the Federal Republic of Germany. But it is possible for them to volunteer as doctors in the Federal defence forces. They then become officially medical officers. This possibility was opened by a 1975 law passed by the Federal parliament with the support of the opposition. The Federal Defence Ministry declared that the new regulation would further social equality between man and woman. But naturally in the first place the new law was intended to remedy the shortage of medical officers.

With the aim of bringing the medical service of the armed forces up to the civilian level the first nursing school for longer serving soldiers was opened in Giessen in 1977. The school, which had State recognition, also trained female nurses.

Women medical officers are governed by the same regulations as women officials in government service. In 1982 a woman for the first time became head of an armed forces unit. She was Senior Staff doctor Dagmar Pap of the Air Froce medical flight at Wunstorf airfield near Hanover. Apart from civilian personnel she is responsible for 2,000 uniformed men.

In answer to a written question from six women M.P.s of the SPD Federal parliamentary party on the subject of "Women in the Bundeswehr" at the beginning of 1982, Parliamentary State Secretary Willfried Penner said 26.8 per cent of all civilian employees are women whereas in the rest of the Federal administration the proportion was 15.5 per cent. At the Armed Forces Universities 285 professors and assistant professors are employed at the moment, of whom only three are women.

The exact figures are as follows: In the field of the Federal Ministry of Defence 48,895 civilian women employees are at work, of whom 27,842 are in civilian jobs while 21,053 civilian women employees are working with the actual armed forces. In both fields most women are in the middle ranks - in the civilian area 11,675, with the forces 17,249. The Ministry has no concrete plans at the moment for furthering women.

4. Women and the trade unions

Trade unions play an important role in the public life of the Federal Republic of Germany. Yet this field is largely the domain of men. Women are inadequately represented among the leadership of the German trade unions. The Institute of German Industry (IW) in Cologne drew attention in an investigation in 1982 to the lack of women in leading positions in the trade unions. In the German trade union federation (DGB) 20.3 per cent of the members are women (in figures 1,596,274). The largest number of women belong to the IG Metall (the Metalworkers union), followed closely by the trade union for public service, transport and traffic with 303,190 women members. The trade union for trade, banks and insurance with 190,974 women members, has the third largest number of women in the DGB. Yet these very considerable numbers have no corresponding representation in the leadership. Out of the 126 posts at the head of the DGB only 10 are in the hands of women.

In the German Federation of Officials (DBB) women have even less representation at the top. In the four-man executive of the DBB there no women at all although 201,128 women belong to the Federation which amounts to 24.5 per cent.

The German trade union of Salaried Employees (DAG) has nearly 200,000 women members - that is 38 per cent. The DAG is the trade union with the highest proportion of women but in the leadership there is only one woman. But at least she is a deputy committee member. In the Christian trade Union Federation (CGB) on the other hand women are not represented at all in the leadership.

The wage negotiation commissions of the trade unions were accused in 1981 of a certain "hostility to women." In a study produced by the DGB Research Institute the unions were charged with not exerting enough efforts on behalf of women. Although the share of women members was increasing there were hardly any women in the bodies where decisions were made nor in the joint consultative councils in the factories. A woman was very often included in the wage negotiating commissions as an "alibi."

Women certainly do not deserve this treatment. For the number of women trade union members is increasing faster than the number of male members. Women are quite obviously prepared to stand up for their rights in the world of labour. The potential for new trade union members lies quite clearly with women for only one-third of the women are at the moment organised while working men are already 50 per cent organised. Women's readiness to take on social-political work in the factories too is shown by another figure. The proportion of women members of works councils has increased sharply in the last 10 years. In 1968 there were 11.4 per cent works council women members, in 1981 it was 19.2 per cent (Source: DGB Nachrichten).

5. Women and the Church

Two large churches dominate religious life in the Federal Republic of Germany - the Roman Catholic church with 27 million members, of whom 14.2 million are women, and the Evangelical protestant church, of whose roughly 30 million members nearly 16 million are women.

TheEvangelical Church in Germany (EKD) published a study in 1979 with the title "The Woman in Family, Church and Society." It was overdue for only since January, 1978 has there been equality between man and woman in the pastoral office of the

member churches of the EKD regulated by church law. At the time the study was being produced there were 1,600 to 1,700 women theologians either in a vocation or still studying. The number of women students in the Theology faculties amounts to about 30 per cent of the total.

Women were active in considerable numbers in the Evangelical church before January, 1978. The statistics of the EKD relate to 1973. At that time, of 215,472 full and part-time workers, 150,424 (69.8 per cent) were women. But men predominated in the senior positions. In the field of preaching and care of souls 95 per cent were men, in the field of church music it was 65 per cent and in the People's Mission Service 76 per cent. On the other hand the number of women was disproportionately high in the household and economic branch (85 per cent) and in the Social Care service (95 per cent). In the social educational service also the proportion of women with 91 per cent, was very high.

The authors of the study write self-critically:

> "In the first place the member churches take the view that a woman pastor who is married would give first priority to her family role over her vocational role. (The regulations reflect this belief). Looked at more closely these discussions show that the anthropological problem of relations between man and woman that has been completely repressed for centuries, is more openly discussed today, it is true, but in no way has it been sufficiently clarified although the theological denial of any difference in rank at the creation would make it appear so. The unexplained reservations shows plainly the close connection between the perceptions of the Church and the generality of people. It points to tasks lying before us which theologians, both male and female should take up together with medical men and psychologists."

The authors of the study found out that at Protestant Sunday services women make up 65 per cent of the congregations. The number of women who leave the church is likewise small by comparison with men - the proportion is about one to three. In the case of younger women however the authors observed an increasing withdrawal from the church.
(9)

"To believe means - I become engaged to the revolution." This sentence was written by a woman, a Protestant theologian. Dr Dorothee Soelle, born 1929, wrote it in a volume of poetry. Frau Soelle is one of the most committed theologians in the Federal Republic of Germany. In 1968 she established together with the then Benedictine father Fulbert Steffensky in Cologne, the ecumenical working circle, "Political Goodnight Prayer." Her plan was to combine church services with social and political analysis. One year later Dorothee Soelle published her first volume of poetry "Meditations and Texts for use." Frau Soelle, born the daughter of the well-known authority on labour law, Professor Hans Carl Niperdey, has devoted more and more time in recent years to the peace movement.

The peace movement has also engaged the attentions of another prominent woman theologian in the Federal Republic of Germany. She is Dr. Uta Ranke-Heinemann, who was born in 1927 in Essen. Her father, Dr. Gustav Heinemann, was from 1969 to 1974 the third Federal President of the Federal Republic of Germany. Frau Heinemann at first studied evangelical theology. In 1953 she converted to the catholic faith and studied catholic theology in Munich. In 1954 she took her degree in this also. In 1969 Frau Heinemann obtained her doctorate in catholic theology. The theologian created a record. She was the first woman Professor for catholic theology in the world.

6. The wives of the Federal Presidents

The wives of the Federal Presidents of the Federal Republic of Germany are placed in the full glare of public attention because of the position of their husbands. But all five women whose husbands have so far occupied this highest office in the State, used their position not to increase their prestige in society but above all for welfare work.

Elly Heuss-Knapp, wife of the first Federal president, established in 1950 the Mothers Convalescent Foundation. This institution which also bears the title "Elly Heuss-Knapp Foundation" was formed to enable overburdened mothers to have a convalescent holiday. Already by the end of 1950 there were 42 recognised mothers' convalescent homes throughout the country and the first monetary collection brought in 2.5

million DM. A stocktaking in 1979 showed that in just under 30 years about 195 million DM had been collected and that in the same period of time two million women had taken part in holidays made possible by the Mother's Convalescent Foundation.

Like Elly Heuss-Knapp, who was founder and chairman of the Mothers Convalescent Foundation, the wives of succeeding Federal presidents likewise became chairman of the Mothers Convalescent Foundation. Wilhelmine Luebke headed it from 1962 to 1969, Hilda Heinemann from 1969 to 1974. Her successor in office from 1974 to 1979 was Dr Mildred Scheel. Since August, 1979 Dr Veronica Carstens has been chairman.

Some of these women have also been deeply engaged in other social fields. Wilhelmine Luebke, for example. was one of the founders of the Board of Trustees for German Help to the Aged which is now 20 years old and active in work among senior citizens. Hilda Heinemann engaged herself in the re-socialisation of ex-prisoners. And Dr. Mildred Scheel, who like Dr. Veronica Carstens is a doctor of medicine, made the public aware of cancer precautionary measures.

7. Women in the cultural sphere

Women in the Federal Republic of Germany have access to all media - they are news readers in television, radio reporters, editors in newspapers and illustrateds. But here it is the same as in the parties and trade unions. The chief posts are mainly occupied by men.

One of the few women who managed to become chief editor of a newspaper was Dr. Marion Countess Doerhoff. An East Prussian by birth, she took over the editor's chair of the Hamburg weekly, Die Zeit, in 1968. In a questionnaire circulated by the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung to prominent people she answered the question as to what her motto was in life by saying: "The aim is not the decisive thing but the means that one is prepared to use to achieve it."

As a journalist she was always more committed to people than to power. This earned her in October, 1971 the Peace prize of the German book trade - one of the highest distinctions in the cultural field that can be awarded in the Federal Republic of

Germany. In the citation for the award it said:

"As a publicist Countess Doenhoff has advocated a policy of reconciliation and understanding between all nations in East and West. Criticism and contributing to political realities in accordance with the principle of democracy have stamped her life's work for the idea of all peoples living together without the use of force."

In the meantime Dr. Marion Doenhoff has become one of the publishers of Die Zeit. In 1981 her book appeared "From Yesterday to the Day after Tomorrow. On the History of the Federal Republic of Germany." She has said about this book:

"Today is only provisional, nobody has much expectation of tomorrow and nobody knows when the day after tomorrow will come. Some believe it is uncertain whether there will be a day after tomorrow for anyone. The only thing that is sure is that yesterday - thank God - is behind us."

Another woman who is occupied with "yesterday" is the author Luise Rinser. In 1981, when she became 70, she published her memoirs under the title "Embrace the wolf." She belongs to one of the best-known of the older woman authors in the Federal Republic of Germany.

One of the most read young woman writers is Gabriele Wohmann who was born in 1932 in Darmstadt. She became known to the public in 1965 through her novel "Farewell for a Long Time" - the story of a woman who leaves her parents' home to go and live with her lover but later returns to her parents. Gabriele Wohmann has been a member of the P.E.N. Centre Federal Republic since 1960 and since 1980 member of the German Academy for Language and Writing.

Twelve years younger than Gabriele Wohmann, Elisabeth Countess von Plessen, who was born in Neustadt, Holstein, in 1944, has made a big name for herself as a writer in quite a short time. Writing under the name Elisabeth Plessen she first became known in 1974 when she published the memoirs of Katia Mann which she wrote herself on the basis of talks with the widow of the author Thomas Mann. Her first novel appeared in 1976 with the title "Information to the Aristocracy" and earned her at once the Critics' prize of the Berlin Academy of Arts. Inside four years this novel

has reached sales of 100,000 copies. Her second novel "Kohlhaas" in 1979 had similar success. "Information to the Aristocracy" is very much am autobiographical novel centred on a fundamental conflict between daughter and father - a conflict that involves not only different generations but different social classes.

With the strengthening of the new women's movement at the end of the sixties more and more women have had the courage to write. A whole series of women's book publishers have arisen and even the established publishers, hurrying to catch up with this development, have started special "women's programmes."

8. Women and Industry

Of the 18.7 million women between the ages of 15 and 59 living in the Federal Republic of Germany, nearly 10 million are working. Sixty per cent of these women are married and one third of them have children under 15. The Federal Ministry for Youth, Families and Health reports: "Roughly half of the working women in 1978 were salaried employees (50 per cent) while nearly one-third (32 per cent) were doing manual work. The rest was divided between self-employed, helping out and public officials." The proportion of self-employed in professinal life who are women is only 5 per cent while 4 per cent of employed women are officials. The largest proportion of women are in the following vocational groups:

Textile workers	91 per cent
Cleaning trades	84 per cent
Social care vocations	83 per cent
Health service vocations	75 per cent

Ever since 1954 the Federal Republic of Germany has had an Association of Women Entrepreneurs and it now has 1,400 members. This association represents a considerable economic potential for its active full-time members employ about 240,000 workers. Divided up into categories 39 per cent are in industrial works, 11 per cent in the building industry, 33 per cent in trade and crafts and 17 per cent in service industries.

Many of these entrepreneurs are "self-made women" meaning they have built up the firm themselves. This is the case with 32 per cent of the members. Ten per cent have bought the companies which they run and 58 per cent of them have inherited them. The conditions of membership show what economic importance the founder of the association Kaethe Ahlmann wanted it to have. Only women who employ at least ten persons or have an annual turnover of at least one million DM are accepted. Altogether in the Federal Republic there are about 23,000 independent women entrepreneurs with at least 10 employees (not counting agricultural businesses). Women entrepreneurs comprise about 12 per cent of all entrepreneurs in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Women are also to be found in the upper echelons of the economic hierarchies in the Federal Republic of Germany. The Federal Land (State) of Lower Saxony has had a woman economics minister - CDU politician Birgit Breuel - since 1978. And for the first time a woman has been President of the Federal Supervisory Office for Credit since October, 1975. She is Dr. Inge Lore Baehre. From her office in Berlin (West) she keeps an eye on banks and savings institutions.

9. The women's movement and education

Katrin Boerner of the German Press Agency (dpa) wrote in 1981 about the voting attitudes of women in the Federal Republic:

> "The voting behaviour of women changes just as it does with men. Women react to political events, form an opinion and act accordingly. The course this process takes and the outcome differ as between the two sexes. Women for instance participate less in political discussion than men. In a poll in the Federal Republic of Germany 32 per cent of the men but only 13 per cent of the women said they frequently had political discussions with friends. It would be too simple to attribute this differing behaviour to a differing degree of political interest depending on sex. The poll showed on the contrary a connection between the number of political discussions and the standard of education. While 46 per cent of persons with a high

standard of education frequently discussed politics, the figure was 25 per cent for those with a medium standard and only 15 per cent in the case of those with a low standard. Since fewer women than men in the Federal Republic have had a higher education this could be the reason for their shyness about political subjects."

That is true. The words "Our son will get a good professional training, the daughter can do something to earn a bit of money before she gets married" are not heard so often these days, it is true, but this way of thinking has not quite disappeared from the minds of many citizens. That has its reasons. Female education is a subject which for German men was a bit suspect at the beginning of the century. And if there had to be education for women then at least it should be in the hands of men.

Helene Lange, one of the most prominent German fighters for women's rights (1848 - 1930) used to get angry before the first world war and even in 1922 over statements at teachers' meetings and quotations in a paper delivered at a philologists convention which sounded as follows:

"Because of the nature of the female psyche which needs someone to lean on, men are especially suited for all kinds of activity at girl's schools... " and "Married male teachers should be given preference over unmarried female teachers because as husbands they have the opportunity to comprehend with the depths of their being the sort of pure femininity to which we wish the majority of our young girls to be educated. ..."

With this background it is not to be wondered at that politics in Germany was regarded for decades as men's business. Yet already in the 19th. Century there was a very militant women's movement i Germany. The founder of the organised German women's movement was Luise Otto-Peters (1819 to 1895), who as early as 1849 was publishing a "Woman's Newspaper." She bequeathed women the following motto: "In the midst of the great upheavals in which we all find ourselves, women will see themselves forgotten if they forget to think about themselves." The Woman's newspaper was shut down in 1850

because according to the press laws of the day only men could be responsible editors but the spark of the women's movement had already caught light. In 1865 the General German Women's Society was founded in Leipzig.

In October of the same year - 1865 - Luise Otto-Peters passed a resolution at a women's conference which read:

> "The first German Women's conference declares that labour as the basis of a whole new society, is a duty and an honour for the female sex. It lays claim to the right to work and holds it to be necessary that all obstacles standing in the way of female labour be removed."

From the bgeinning the German women's movement had a very strong social commitment. At the urging of the General German Women's associations associations of women workers were established in various places. The question of education appeared to women to be ever more important. In 1890 therefore under the guidance of Helene Lange the General German Women teachers Association was formed. And four years later the Federation of German Women's associations was founded. To begin with it embraced 65 associations but 20 years later it comprised 60 organisations with about 3,000 branches and over half a million members. Shortly before the turn of the century, in 1899 the German Evangelical Women's Federation was established, called into life by the woman author Hedwig Dransfeld. One of those on the evangelical wing of the women's movement was Elly Heuss-Knapp (1881 to 1952) who as a 19-year old helped to found the first further education school for girls in Strasbourg. She worked there as a teacher for civic affairs.

After the first world war in 1918 women in Germany were given active as well as passive voting rights. When the National Assembly convened in Weimar on January 19, 1919 women deputies were present for the first time. One of the most important steps on the road to equal rights had been taken. But with the end of the first German republic in 1933 came the end of the German women's movement. The National Socialists who seized power in that year, had other ideas about the role of the woman.

(16)

Following the second world war the German Women's Ring was founded in 1949 and in 1951 the German Women's Council came into existence. In these two umbrella organisations over 100 women's associations and federations with links, in some cases, to parties, trade unions and churches, are banded together with a total of 10 million members. The work of the German Women's Council is supported financially by the Federal government.

10. The new women's movement

At the end of the sixties a new women's movement grew up in the Federal Republic of Germany with its roots partly in the student movement. It called itself "autonomous" because it wanted to have nothing to do with the established women's federations and women's associations affiliated to parties and trade unions. This women's movement is feminist and vehemently opposed to discrimination against women in society and in jobs. In its action against Paragraph 218 of the Criminal Code (the ban on abortion) the movement found support from wide sections of the public in the early seventies. The efforts of the autonomous women's movement were successful, the paragraph was amended. In 1976 the amended law came into force. Abortion during the first 12 weeks of a pregnancy is now no longer an offence if the woman is in a serious social predicament.

Other demands made by the autonomou women's movement were also taken up by the general public. One example is the provision of women's houses to provide an initial refuge for women who have been mistreated. In March, 1982, the then Federal Minister for Youth, Families and Health, Antje Huber wrote in the Social-democratic Press service:

"The problem of violence in the family, the mistreatment of women by their husbands, has been passed over in silence for a long time. Even today the amount of psychological and physical violence in these relationships is often made light of. But unfortunately there are no grounds for doing so as the results of the prototype Berliner Women's House bear witness. This was the first women's house in the Federal Republic of Germany. We backed it together with the Berlin Senate as a model project from 1976 to 1979.

During this period about 2,500 women and about as many children found protection there. This project was so to speak, the foundation stone of our activities against violence to women. At the time the support we gave was regarded as pretty sensational. With the exception of groups from the women's movement the problem was not even recognised as one by the general public and therefore had hardly been tackled. Today we can say there has been a change in people's consciousness of the problem. The problem can no longer be overlooked, it has been made public. This change is reflected in the growing number of women's houses that have been set up by private initiative. In the meantime over 120 have opened their doors in both large and small cities in the Federal Republic of Germany."

In the new women's movement there are women's centres, women's bookshops, women's pubs - and even two important women's magazines. There is to start with the "Courage" in Berlin and then the "Emma" in Cologne, founded by Alice Schwarzer, one of the figureheads of the new women's movement.

The journalist Alice Schwarzer, born 1942, focussed public attention on the campaign against Paragraph 218 in the Federal Republic with an article in the Hamburg magazine, Stern, in 1971. In this article 400 women, some of them very prominent ones, admitted having had an abortion. In 1975 Alice Schwarzer accepted an offer to teach at the Sociological Institute of the University of Muenster on the theme of women's emancipation. In 1977 her magazine Emma appeared for the first time. In 1981 she told the German Press Agency in an interview: "The situation for committed, militant women is noticeably tougher today than it was a few years ago." And in her book "That's how it started" Alice Schwarzer wrote: "Emotion and reason, motherliness and creativity, belly and head, sensitivity and daring - that is the range of our capabilities. We wanted to reach out for knowledge just as we reach out for the stars - and we have done it."

11. Profession and partnership

It is above all knowledge that the women of the Federal Republic of Germany have reached out for more and more in

(18)

recent years. This development is particularly clear to be seen in the number of women students at evening schools and colleges set up to give people a second chance to improve their educational standard. In 1965 the proportion of female students at these colleges was 18.9 per cent. In 1979 it had risen to 46.4 per cent. Similarly there has been an expanded demand for professional training. The figures speak a plain language. In 1970 the proportion of women with some form of vocational training was only 38 per cent of all women in employment. In 1978 it was almost 52 per cent (Source: Federal Ministry for Education and Science).

Parents are beginning to recognise that a good professional training is a modern form of "dowry." For marriage today is no longer a guarantee that the girl will be looked after for the whole of her lifetime. The category of women who after marrying and having the first child, give up their job for ever, is growing smaller all the time. Most women go back to their jobs when the children are bigger. But their chances on the labour market are not so good unless they can show that they have some kind of training. At the same time the category of women who never give up their work but stick to their job continuously until they reach retirement age is expanding. It is true that girls still prefer the so-called typical women's vocations. For this reason in recent years the Federal Ministry for Education and Science has supported various prototype projects to train girls in men's jobs as well.

In recent years the proportion of women who begin university studies has also increased. Whereas in 1975 it was 36.6 per cent, by 1980 it had climbed to 40 per cent. In professional life women remain far too often in the subordinate positions. One example is the teaching profession. In 1978 the proportion of female full-time teachers at general educational schools in the Federal Republic was 55 per cent. But most women teachers were working at elementary and ordinary schools and here the proportion of women teachers was 64 per cent. Women teachers are also over-proportionally represented at schools for handicapped with 64 per cent. In grammar schools on the other hand the proportion of women teachers is only 36 per cent. In evening

schools and colleges this proportion is even smaller . It sinks to 29 per cent.

Society in the Federal Republic of Germany has not reached the end of the road leading to equal partnership between man and woman. The unwritten law is still valid - if a woman wants to obtain a position she must be twice as good as the men. Having the same qualifications is usually not enough.

The struggle for equal rights for women began when Nora moved out of the doll's house. Since then Nora's daughters have grown up. In the Federal Republic of Germany they have achieved much of which their mothers only dreamed. But there is still plenty of work for Nora's grand-daughters.

(IN-Press)

12. Important Addresses

Federal Ministry for Youth, Families and Health
Kennedyallee 105 - 107, 5300 Bonn 2

German Trade Union Federation (DGB)
Hans-Boeckler-strasse 39, 4000 Duesseldorf 1

Mothers Convalescent Work, Elly Heuss-Knapp Foundation,
Postfach 1260, 8504 Stein/Mfr.

German Women's Council
Suedstrasse 125, 5300 Bonn 2

Association of Women Entrepreneurs e.v.
Gustav Heinemann-Ufer 94, 5000 Koeln 51

Emma Women's Publishers GmbH
Kolpingplatz 1 a, 5000 Koeln 1

13. Literature for further reference

Women '80
Publisher: Federal Ministry for Youth, Families and Health
Bonn, 1980

Women's Emancipation and Social-democracy
Publisher: Heinz Niggemann, Frankfurt, 1981

70 Years of women's studies - Women in Science
Publisher: Kristine von Soden and Gaby Zipfel, Koeln 1979

History of the German women's movement - from the beginning to 1945
Publisher: Cordula Koepcke, Freiburg 1981

Women's Programme - against Discrimination
Publisher: Marie-Louise Janssen-Jurreit, Reinbek 1979

Women and Education
Publisher: Federal Ministry for Education and Science,
Bonn 1981